A Report

On

Missionary Exertions

In New Jersey,

Including

A view of its Present

Religious State.

Aug. 1819.

D B Johnson.

"History of Missions in New Jersey including a view of its present Religious State".

In the year 1745, the whole of New Jersey was, properly speaking, missionary ground. The population then amounted to 61,000, and the Presbyterian congregations, which were most numerous, were not more than ten. In that year the Rev. David Brainerd, the first missionary in this state, commenced his labours among the Indians, under the patronage of the "Society in Scotland, for propagating Christian Knowledge."

He had previously directed his attention to the Indians at Kanaumeek, Minisinks, the Forks of Delaware, and on the Susquehannah. After undergoing a variety of toils and labours, & meeting with little success, he visited Crosweeksung in N Jersey, about eighty

miles southwest of the Forks of Delaware, which became the principal scene of his labours. Here he found the Indians scattered in small settlements from six to thirty miles distant from each other, and not more than two or three families residing in the same place. After hearing Mr Brainerd, these poor people travelled ten or fifteen miles, to give notice to their friends that a minister had arrived, by which means their little company was much increased. No cavilling nor opposition was made, though in time past they had manifested as great a dislike to the gospel as any Indians whatever. They were now anxious to obtain instruction, and they listened to the discourses of their Minister, with the utmost seriousness & attention. Such was their sensibility of heart, that a few words concerning their souls would produce a the most abundant weeping. It was astonishing

how they were melted with the love of the Redeemer, and with the invitations of the gospel, when not a word of terror was spoken. On one occasion, as Mr Brainerd was preaching on the parable of the 'Great Supper',† the Spirit of God seemed to descend on the whole assembly, and with astonishing energy overpowered all resistance. It was in some measure a second Pentecost. Nearly the whole congregation, the old, the middle aged, and the young were overwhelmed with its influence. Nor was this a transient scene, but lasted, in a greater or less degree, for a considerable time. Every sermon seemed productive of good. Many, who had previously experienced only some slight emotions, were now under deep convictions of sin. And those who had obtained comfort appeared humble & devout, possessing a remarkable tenderness of conscience, and a deep concern to regulate their life, by the laws of Christ. Love to the brethren reigned

† Luke 14: 16-24 -

among them, while love to the Redeem-
er, mingled with the desire of full
enjoyment of him, seemed to possess each heart.

After this encouragement,
Mr Brainerd proposed taking a mid
journey to the Susquehannah. On
his way, he visited the Forks of
Delaware; where he found the In-
dians unusually impressed with re-
ligion, as several of them had been at
Crosweeksung, & had there beheld, &
felt the power of divine truth. Others
who had refused to hear Mr Brainerd,
continued to manifest the most in-
veterate hatred not only to Mr Brainerd,
but to all those, who attended his
ministry. — Leaving the Forks of
Delaware, he proceeded on his jour-
ney to the Susquehannah, directing his
course to an Indian town, called Sho-
moking, about 120 miles to the westward. These Indians had been much
addicted to vice, but they received
their missionary kindly; listened to
the gospel with great attention; and
expressed a desire for further instruc-
tion, but most of them, after a few

days, set off into the wilderness, on a hunting expedition.

Leaving this place therefore, Mr Brainerd travelled down the river to Juneauta. Though the Indians in this place had previously appeared less under the influence of prejudice against Christianity, than most of their countrymen, yet they were now too much engaged, in celebrating their idolatrous feasts, and in superstitiously consulting their powaws, to listen to the glad tidings of salvation.

Having again failed in his attempts to introduce Christianity on the Susquehannah, Mr Brainerd returned to Crosweeksung; and on his arrival was struck with the great difference between the Indians he had just visited, & his own congregation, who, instead of engaging in idolatrous feasts & drunken revels, worshipped the God of heaven, received his word, and lived devoted to his glory. On resuming his labours, he found the same happy effects attend his ministry

as formerly. After a sermon on the new birth, by which a general & deep impression was made, many of the Indians followed Mr Brainerd to his lodgings, and begged to be further instructed in the way of salvation. But he had not spoken long, before all the unconverted were seized with concern for their souls. It seemed as if none whether old or young would now be left. While numbers were rejoicing that God had not taken his Holy Spirit from them, others were dissolved in tears, some of them almost overwhelmed with anguish.

"With a view of improving the Indians in Christian knowledge, Mr Brainerd commenced catechetical instruction. Sometimes he examined them on some important points in divinity; sometimes on the discourses he had delivered, but most frequently on the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. It was truly surprising to see how readily & perspicuously

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the Indians answered the questions proposed. Their knowledge of the principles of religion was found on trial far more extensive & correct, than could reasonably have been expected. And this exercise was remarkably blessed in promoting their progress, not only in theoretical, but experimental knowledge.

In 1746, a school was opened for instructing the Indians in reading & writing the English language. About twenty children immediately entered it; and in less than seven months, several of them were able to read the New Testament. There were also about twenty adults, who attended the school at evening.

Besides attending to the religious & moral improvement of the Indians, Mr Brainerd was anxious to obtain for them a fixed settlement, and form them to habits of industry. And to accomplish this, he prevailed on the society in Scotland, to furnish the means of recovering the lands, which the Indians, by their

former vices, had lost. Having thus secured their property, he fixed on a spot at Cranbury, about fifteen miles from Croswecksung, and proceeded to form a regular settlement.

Incessant as Mr Brainerd had been in his labours; numerous & dreadful as were the difficulties & hardships he had often to encounter; yet so far was he from being weary of a missionary life, that now when he had the prospect of settling as the pastor of the Indian flock, he had collected in the wilderness, he looked forward to it with apprehension, and considered it a sort of trial. And he at length concluded that it was his duty not to enjoy the luxuries of a settled home, but to traverse the wilderness, submitting not only to hardships & privations, but to death itself if the gospel of Jesus required.

With these impressions, and notwithstanding his constitution was now broken, he resolved to make another attempt for the evangelizing of the

Indians on the Susquehannah. He proceeded to Shomokin, where more attention to religion was manifested than formerly. The same encouragement was given on the Great Island, a place about fifty miles distant on the northwestern branch of the Susquehannah.

On this journey, Mr Brainard suffered extremely by indisposition, occasioned partly by excessive labour, and partly by lying whole nights in the wilderness, without even the slightest shelter to preserve him from the inclemency of the weather. In the course of a month, he was obliged, not only by his own extreme debility, but by the general sickness then prevalent, to return again to his own congregation. Here he once more resumed his labours, as far as his exhausted strength would permit, and for the last administered the Lords supper to his little flock, then consisting of nearly forty communicants. His whole congregation amounted

to one hundred & fifty. But he was now destined to leave them. His disease made slow, but visible progress; and he at length died in the triumphs of the gospel, Oct 9, 1747.

Mr Brainerd was succeeded in his charge by his brother, the Rev. John Brainerd. Under his ministry the affairs of the mission continued, for some years, in a flourishing state. The number of his congregation increased to about two hundred. Their School prospered, and they daily made progress in civilization, and the arts of life.

In the year 1759, Mr Brainerd settled the Indians on a tract of land, which was purchased for them, by the government of New Jersey, consisting of about four thousand acres, and situated near the centre of the State. The soil was good, & suitable for the various productions necessary in life. It does not appear, however, that this new arrangement met

with that success which was expected. The particular causes, to which, this is to be ascribed, are not certainly known.

During the American war, Mr Brainerd's correspondence with the society in Scotland was suspended; and towards the close of it he died.

In the year 1783, Mr Brainerd was succeeded in the charge of the Indian Congregation, by the Rev David Simon, an Indian, who had been ordained to the ministry; but he was soon after suspended for his irregularities. No missionary was appointed to succeed him; but the congregation was occasionally supplied, by the neighbouring ministers.

In July 1802, some commissioners from N. Jersey conducted eighty nine Delaware Indians, the remainder of Mr John Brainerd's congregation, to New Stockbridge, to place them under the ministry of Mr Sergeant, a missionary.

As the Indians collected by Mr Brainerd had, for some time

previously, been destitute of Schools, and of divine worship, several of them had scattered abroad in the wilderness, and returned again to their former vices; others, however, we are assured, persisted in a life of holy obedience; and many, we trust, are now in heaven, with their benevolent patron, emphatically, the friend of the Indians, celebrating the praises of God, and of the Lamb.

From the year 1783 till 1816, there were no missionaries employed in N. Jersey, excepting itinerant ministers of the Baptist and Methodist denominations, of whom no particular accounts have been received for this report.

In the year 1816, Mr. Phineas Camp, a licentiate, & student, from the Princeton Theological Seminary, engaged in missionary labours, in Sussex County, under the direction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church — Though no par-

particular documents have been received, to afford a complete account of Mr Camp's mission, yet it may be confidently stated, that his labours were greatly blessed. The Spirit of God ~~was pleased~~ seemed to set his seal to the faithfulness of these labours, by the conversion of many souls. In almost every place that he visited, a revival of religion followed. And while many were quickened in the divine life, multitudes were raised from a death of sin, to a life of holiness -

to be continued -

In June 1817, Messrs Otto S Hoyt, and Ashbel G Fairchild, licentiates & students from the Theological Seminary, were employed as missionaries by the "Western Missionary Society of New Jersey." †

Mr Hoyt was engaged five weeks in the South Western & Southern part of the State. He found the people, he visited, extremely destitute of religious ordinances. They welcomed their missionary with the greatest expressions of joy; were anxious to receive instruction; and they listened with interest & attention to the preaching of the gospel. Mr Hoyt is now settled as pastor of a Church in Vermont. A want of materials has prevented a more particular account of his mission. ——

Mr Fairchild was employed six weeks in the North Western part of the State, principally in Sussex County. ——

† Note, This society was instituted, — 1816 —

He preached most frequently at Wantage, Deckertown, Stanhope, & Paccaguarry. He was received with much cordiality by the people, and met with no opposition in any form. Non-professors themselves were sensible of their destitute situation, and were anxious to have the bread of life broken to them. They not only treated the gospel with outward respect, but in some instances were brought under convictions of sin, and a happy reformation succeeded, while the people of God were animated & comforted.

Mr Fairchild is now settled in Morgantown, Virginia.

In Feb 1818, The Rev. Burr Baldwin, (from the Andover Seminary) was employed by the N Jersey Missionary Society,* to labour five weeks at Jersey City & Hoboken, in Bergen county.

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*Note. The new Jersey Missionary Society was instituted in 1802. It early became auxiliary to the New York

Both these places were peculiarly in need of the gospel. Many were found extremely ignorant, vicious & unconcerned about their eternal interest. And professing Christians for want of stated instruction had dishonoured their profession, by their declension in religion.

Missionary society, and transmitted its funds to the parent society. In 1808 the society patronized a school among the Cherokee Indians, which, upon its adoption, was called the "Jersey School." This establishment, however, was broken up, in the year 1810, during the Indian war.

In 1810, the society employed two missionaries the Rev. Jacob Green and the Rev Burr Baldwin, to missionate, a year, on the Ohio river in the States of Ohio & Virginia. Their labours were attended with considerable success.

At Hoboken, before Mr Baldwin arrived, the people had not heard preaching for several months; and had been favoured with only a few occasional sermons for two years. The people being unaccustomed to public worship, but few attended at first. The congregation, however, increased, and there appeared to be a prospect of doing much good. The people listened with interest to the public instructions of their missionary, and private visits were attended with apparent success.

When Mr Baldwin's term had expired, Mr — Frazier, a licentiate, was commissioned by the same Society, to labour, three months, at Jersey City, Hoboken & Harsimus. Mr Frazier confirms Mr Baldwin's account of these places; and represents many of the inhabitants, as not only neglecting education & piety, but abandoned to the most degrading vices. All ages united in violating the sabbath, & blaspheming the

name & worship of God. The haunts of amusement & sin were unceasingly open, and were the resort not only of the inhabitants of those places, but of thousands, on the Sabbath, from the city of New York.

A Hope, however, was, in some measure, put to this current of iniquity, by the gracious outpouring of God's Spirit. The vices of the people became a subject of deep regret to Christians. A special prayer-meeting was called, and such a spirit of supplication was then imparted, that the work of God, which so soon commenced, seemed to be a direct answer to prayer. Several were immediately under convictions of sin. The number soon increased to eighty, of whom twelve became hopefully pious. The work continued to progress. Mr Frazier was constantly engaged in preaching, visiting and conversing with enquiring Souls. He instituted a bible class; and also distributed bibles to those who

were destitute. At the close of his term Mr Frazier left the mission, and is now settled in the congregation at Westfield.—

In May (1818) Mr Baldwin resumed his labours, under the direction of the same society, and continued a year in Sussex County. His principal stations were Hardiston, Hamburg & Vernon. When Mr Baldwin first arrived, the gospel was treated by many with cold indifference, or rather with contempt. The sanctuary was left almost desolate. Even motives of curiosity would hardly induce persons to attend on the ordinances of religion. Intemperance, and other vices prevailed among all classes. But an evident change has taken places, not only among the vicious, but the pious. The Spirit of God has descended & softened the asperity of party feeling, occasioned by the mutual prejudices & jealousies of different denominations of Christians.—

This heavenly influence has also melted the hearts of many hardened sinners, and brought them to a knowledge of the Saviour; and they now of course, cheerfully, attend on public worship.

In this destitute region two Churches have been organized; one called the North Church, at Hardiston; the other in Hamburg, including the members at Vernon.

Hardiston has shared richly in the effusions of the Holy Spirit. A general attention to religion has been excited, and between sixty and seventy have become regular members of the Church. Nearly twenty others give evidences of piety.

In Hamburg & Vernon, there has also been a special attention to religion. Nearly thirty have connected themselves with the people of God. In Pochunk, a district in Vernon, there has been an increasing seriousness for several

months. Some entertain hopes that they have met with a change of heart.

On this missionary ground, there have been nine Sunday Schools established, containing in all about four hundred Scholars. These Schools have produced a surprising effect on both Parents & Children. Some, who have become pious, here received their first religious impressions.

Six Education Societies have also been formed. The Bible class, and the monthly concert have been attended with increasing interest. Mr Baldwin, besides ~~visiting families~~ preaching frequently, was daily employed in visiting families. This was the only means of access, which he had in many instances to the minds of the people; and the effects were happy, as many were thus induced to attend public Worship.

About the same time that Mr Baldwin commenced his last mission, Mr Edward Allen, a licentiate, was employed, a year, by the "Auxiliary Missionary society of Morris."†

His principal stations were three; New Foundland & Stony Brook in Morris; and Long Pond in Bergen County.

In New Foundland the people were extremely destitute though willing to receive instruction. Tears of joy were shed at the arrival of their missionary. They had in former periods been favoured with the preaching of the gospel & had still recollection enough of its importance, to mourn its absence & welcome its return. The Baptist and Methodist had each collected a church, but for several years the ordinances had not been regularly administered —

† This society was formed Aug 8, 1816 auxiliary to the N Jersey society; & designed especially for Morris.

The churches, in consequence gradually declined; and intemperance, profanity, and sabbath-breaking prevailed to an alarming degree. In visiting, Mr King found many heads of families, who were unable to read, and were bringing up their children in ignorance. He therefore early established a Sunday School & Bible Class. The youth made rapid improvement & violations of the sabbath became less frequent. But this was not the only reformation; many were not only outwardly reformed, but inwardly sanctified by the Holy Spirit. An extensive revival of religion commenced, in which forty five were hopefully converted. They in connexion with many other subjects of this work of divine power, have formed themselves into a congregation, and are preparing to build a Church.

Stony Brook, another of Mr King's stations in Morris County, has also been peculiarly blessed with the influence of God's Spirit. It is only about four years, since this was a sort of heathenish place. It lies surrounded

with woods, and retired from the public road. Until Mr Hubbard Styles removed to this place, the gospel had never been heard by many of the inhabitants. He prevailed on the people to assemble on the sabbath for prayer; and succeeded in establishing a sunday school, which has been blessed to their promotion not only in human knowledge, but also in divine. Under Mr Kling's ministry a very general attention to religion has been excited. By the influence of God's Spirit, the ignorant have been enlightened,* the vicious reformed, & the pious animated.

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*. Note. It was stated that a woman, who, a few years ago was perfectly ignorant of the existence of God; that she had a soul; or that there was a heaven or a hell, has become able to read the bible, and gives satisfactory evidence of a change of heart.

Long Pond, in the northern extremity of Bergen County, Mr Alling found, in a great measure, destitute of the means of grace. There was no public worship on the sabbath. Some pious souls were praying for the prosperity of Zion; and by them, their missionary was received with joy. The same vices prevailed here, as in his other stations. A change, however, in the general conduct of the people, soon became apparent. The attention to the preaching of the gospel was highly encouraging, and scarcely a family was left without a blessing.

In each of these stations, a Church has been organized, containing in all a hundred & one members. In other destitute places, Mr Alling also preached; and instituted Sabbath schools, and Bible Classes. In visiting, he distributed religious tracts, & also the precious word of God to many, who had never before read its sacred pages. —— —— ——

During the month of June 1818, Mr Benjamin Lowe, a licentiate, and student of the Princeton Theological Seminary, was engaged in missionary duties by the "Female Missionary Society of Princeton." †

He preached principally at the same places that Mr Fairchild did, in Sussex County. He visited several families, who were not only destitute of the bible, but unable to read its precious contents. In many places the people were anxious to hear the gospel; and in some instances were awakened to a serious concern for their souls; and were under such deep & solemn convictions, that they were unwilling to leave the house of God, when divine services were concluded.

During the short period of Mr Lowe's mission, he preached frequently; distributed nearly fifty bibles, and several

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† This society was instituted in Aug 1817, with a design to employ a missionary during the vacation of the Theological Seminary

hundred religious tracts. The bible was sought, in many instances with the greatest avidity, and read with attention & prayer.

In the succeeding fall, Mr Elias W Crane, ~~also~~ a licentiate, was employed, by the same society, and on the same ground, during the vacation of the Theological Seminary.

He visited several families, who, like the heathen, had never heard of the Saviour. Some did not know that they had souls, and others, who were conscious of this truth, thought their souls were not immortal. Many, however, more enlightened, attended cheerfully on the preaching of their missionary; & were brought by the Spirit of God, to feel ~~more~~ deeply the importance of eternal things, and of their need of an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the course of this mission, Mr Crane besides distributing bibles & tracts, assisted in establishing six Sunday schools, and a monthly concert for prayer.

In December 1818, Mr. Enos A. Osborn, a licentiate was engaged, for three months, by the "N. Jersey Missionary Society."

His principal station was Frankford, in Sussex, about six miles north of Newton. where he has

Unusual attention and solemnity was manifested, on the subject of religion, and the hope was cherished that the Lord would pour out his Spirit, on that destitute region.

He has here collected a congregation among those, who had previously been unaccustomed to public worship.

to be continued.

In (May) 1819, Mr Moses Hunter, a licentiate, was engaged as a missionary, by the "Female Missionary society of Princeton," on the same ground that their former missionaries had occupied. Mr Hunter first proceeded to Sandiston, in the north-western extremity of Sussex. He afterwards took his station, between Newton & Hacket's town, which includes a part of the township of Newton, Stanhope, Byram, and a part of Sutton, an extent of about eight or ten miles, having Hardwick on the west, Succasunny plains, and Flanders, east, and northeast; lying equally remote from all these places of worship, & not attached to either of them; having pious people enough among them to lament the general depravity, but not strength enough to withstand it. They have Quakers near them; & some Methodists among them. Public worship was well attended, and the people were anxious to have regular preaching. Mr Hunter found

none on this station, who were destitute of Bibles; but distributed Bibles and Tracts in other parts of the County He established four Sabbath Schools; one in each of the places embraced in his station; and assisted in reviving three others, in Mr Osborn's Congregation at Frankford.

There is one feature in Mr Hunter's mission, which is peculiar; the establishment of Religious Libraries.

Impressed with the importance, of pious & practical books, to those, who are in a measure destitute of religious ordinances; and in order to give greater permanency to missionary labour, Mr Hunter established three Libraries; one in Sandiston, another in Frankford, and a third in the township of Newton; which have been attended with that success, which sufficiently authorises their encouragement.

In June 1819, Mr. Helling was appointed to succeed Mr. Baldwin, (who had resigned,) in Sussex County; and Mr. Stephen Hayes, a licentiate, was employed, by the Moravian Society, on the Station, which Mr. Helling formerly occupied.

In the conclusion of this report, it may be proper to remark, that Sussex County, as this has been the principal scene of missionary labours, enjoys considerable advantages, and commands considerable importance, in a temporal view. There is much industry, much wealth, much intelligence & refinement, among many of the inhabitants. But in regard to spiritual privileges, it has been, and in a measure, still is, considering the number of its inhabitants, as destitute as any part of the Union. Though it is also true, that there are several very flourishing congregations: Some of these feel, with gratitude, their obligation, to the labours of Missionaries.

General View of the present State of Religion in N. Jersey

In 1810, the Presbyterian denomination was divided into three Presbyteries, viz,

Presbyteries,	Churches.	Ministers.
New Jersey,	29. —	18.
New Brunswic,	22. —	19.
Philadelphia,	10 —	5
Total	64 —	42, Leaving 22 Vacant.

The Dutch Reformed Church, in 1810, was divided into three Classes, viz,—

Classes	Churches.	Ministers.
New Brunswic,	14. —	12
Bergen,	11. —	5
Paramus,	8. —	4 Vacant.
	33. —	21. Leaving 12.

The Episcopal,	24. —	10. Leaving 14.
The Baptist,	about	10
The Methodist,		8
The Congregational,	9. —	5. — 4.
The Friends,	24. —	—
Grand Total,	154 —	96 Leav. 58

The whole population of New Jersey, in 1810 was 245,562. Allowing one Minister to a thousand, (which is the usual calculation,) more than a hundred Ministers would then have been necessary, to have supplied the deficiency.

In 1819, the Presbyterian Church contained the following Presbyteries,

	Presbyteries	Churches	Ministers	
New Jersey,	29.	–	28.	
New Brunswick,	16.	–	16.	
Newton,	25.	–	14.	Vacant
Total	70.	–	58.	Leaving 12.

The Dutch Reformed Church contains,

to be continued.